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## BIRTHMARKS AMONG THE FOLK\*

By

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It is surprising to find, as common as the word birthmark is among persons of all degrees of culture, that the word is not listed as a separate vocabulary term in either the Oxford English Dictionary or the Dictionary of American English. In the Oxford Dictionary the word does occur as a compounded term under the general treatment of the word mark with two citations pertinent to the general theme of this paper. The first of these, under date 1593, reads: "For markes discried in mans natiuitie, Are natures faults, not their own infamie." The second, dated 1831, reads: "The marks of a bunch of currants on his breast with which the boy was born." In the well-known Standard Dictionary of Folklore Mythology and Legend we find under the term birth omen the note that in the island of Karpathos near Crete, marks on a baby's body, no matter how small, are interpreted as significant and referred to as "the fating of the Fates." It is probably in this sense that most marks so familiar to readers of medieval and ancient romances have been used.

We are not primarily concerned, however, with royal marks or marks used for identification of some sort in unraveling the complications of plot. We are concerned both with character traits attributed to pre-natal influence and with what the medical profession refers to as naevi or nevi, defined in An Index of Differential Diagnosis of Main Symptoms as due to congenital dilatation and hypertrophy of the small vessels of the skin, and varying in size from that of a pin head to areas covering large surfaces of the body.<sup>1</sup> These discolorations and variations in the texture of the skin are divided into many categories. Getting more to the point under consideration in this paper, the author of a textbook of anatomy states that what an individual shows at birth is dependent on "the differentiation of the germ plasm, the ovum, and spermatazoön derived from the parents. That condition is affected by intra-uterine influences. What these are and how powerful they may be are important because of the quite common belief in maternal impression. It is important to remember that there is no nerve connection between mother and fetus and no direct circulatory connective."<sup>2</sup> Though we are assured that congenital deformity may result, we are to note also that such deformity occurs by the end of the third month of pregnancy when the fetus is well formed and that nearly always cases of "marking" a child by some fright or craving on the mother's part are associated with the later months of the period of gestation. It is further pointed out that some unpleasantness occurs during

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\* This paper was read at the Annual Meeting of the Tennessee Folklore Society at Nashville, November 1, 1958.

1. Hubert C. French, An Index of Differential Diagnosis of Main Symptoms (Baltimore, 1945), p. 104.

2. J. F. Williams, A Textbook of Anatomy and Physiology (Philadelphia, 1943), p. 22.

nearly every pregnancy and that this is forgotten unless some blemish appears on the child; in which case, some occurrence may be recalled to explain the "mark."<sup>3</sup>

In Successful Marriage we are assured that many young mothers who later attributed marks on their babies to distressing events they had witnessed were quite in error, for "no emotion from which the mother suffers can be transmitted to her child. So-called birthmarks are caused by abnormalities in the development of localized parts of the skin and are not related to the mental or emotional state of the mother."<sup>4</sup>

Regardless of these assurances from the medical profession, the folk have continued to believe in some mysterious influence which leaves a mark indicative, by its size, shape, color, or some other means, of an emotional disturbance suffered by the mother during the period of the child's formation. Faith in equally supra-natural means of eradicating such marks is often evinced. For example, there is a strange belief among Southern Negroes that a birthmark may be removed by rubbing it with an apple every day until it disappears. The eradication may be speeded up by feeding the marked person apples, in addition to the rubbing. One especially interesting case of psychic marking is noted in the book, Marriage for Moderns. A pregnant mother was afraid to ride in a canoe. Some forty years after the birth of her child, when this child was on an outing, someone suggested a canoe ride; the forty-year-old woman paled with fear and could not bear to ride in a boat. Her mother, being present, recalled her own fear of boats forty years before, during the time she was carrying her baby.<sup>5</sup>

This notion that the pregnant mother's experience may mark her child has got into literature in at least one famous novel. Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, professor of anatomy at Harvard for some forty years, wrote three novels which he called medicated novels. In one of these he studies a case of schizophrenia in the main character whose name also supplies the title of the novel, Elsie Venner. It is not clear to what extent Holmes himself believed in birthmarks, but he includes some passages that come very close to the superstitious beliefs concerning these that are circulated among the folk. Among other things, he suggests that birthmarks may fade with age or disappear in death. The general context indicates that a rattlesnake bite suffered by Elsie's mother had left its baleful marks on her child. Let us quote two passages that indicate the "marking" of Elsie as a result of her mother's terrifying experience.

... In God's good time she would come to her true nature and her eyes would lose that frightful glitter; her lips would not feel so cold when she pressed them against his cheek; and that faint birthmark on her neck--her mother swooned when she first saw it--would fade wholly out; it was less marked, surely, now than it used to be!<sup>6</sup>

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3. Ibid.

4. Morris Fishbein (ed.), Successful Marriage (New York, 1949), p. 260.

5. H. A. Bowman, Marriage for Moderns (New York, 1945), p. 434.

6. Quoted in Clarence P. Oberndoff, The Psychiatric Novels of Oliver Wendell Holmes (New York, 1943), p. 51.

. . . . Old Sophy said almost nothing but sat day and night by her dead darling. Sometimes her anguish would find an outlet in strange sounds, something between a cry and a musical note such as none had ever heard her utter before. There were old remembrances surging up from her childish days, death-wails, such as they sing in the mountains of Western Africa when they see the fires on distant hill-sides and know that their own wives and children are undergoing the fate of captives.

At the last moment, when all the preparations were completed, old Sophy stopped over her and with trembling hand loosed the golden cord. She looked intently; there was no shade nor blemish where the ring of gold had encircled the throat.<sup>7</sup>

One may be reminded of one of Holmes' contemporaries who built one of his most famous stories on a birthmark and left his readers with an unblemished but dead heroine, for, though her husband had the joy of seeing the little "fairy hand" fade into the magnificent alabaster of his wife's cheek, her life ebbed away with the mark, as though the mark itself had been rooted in her very heart.

Two items collected from the folk may properly be inserted here. In West Tennessee there was the case of a woman frightened by a snake that actually touched part of her body. When her child was born, the part of its body corresponding to that part of its mother's body touched by the snake was marked with a strange snake-like pattern. Another incident is reported from upper East Tennessee, where a woman gave birth to a child who suffered from convulsions. These were attributed to the fact that the mother had seen a snake killed and had watched, with strange fascination, the wriggling of the snake during its death agony.

To continue with the folk and their beliefs, we find that the stories circulated concerning birthmarks or markings fall into certain well defined patterns. They relate something the mother did; something that was done to her either by emotional disturbance or by physical contact; or something the mother wanted to do and either did or did not do. The instances presented in this paper have been collected from students in my advanced classes in English over a period of two or three years.

Let us deal first with the general class of incidents associated with what the mother did.

In northern Ohio a mother became very angry with her youngest daughter for hitting her older brother. Indeed, she became so angry that one day, reduced to frenzy, she bit her daughter to punish her. Unfortunately, this occurred while the mother was carrying another child. When born, this child bore a birthmark resembling the marks of teeth on her ankle, just where the angry mother was supposed to have bit the child's older sister.

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7. Ibid., pp. 108-109.



Two examples of overindulgence in foods during pregnancy may be given: a mother who overate of liver gave birth to a child with a brown birthmark; another excessively fond of strawberries had a child marked with red strawberry-like splotches.

From the North Carolina mountains comes the report that pregnant mothers must be careful about working at dressing animals like hogs because if they scrape feet or heads to prepare souse or other food, the child may be born with a rough and hairy skin.

In West Tennessee a pregnant mother is reported to have made the mistake of attending a funeral and viewing the corpse. When her child was born, he had a pale, dead-looking expression. A similar case is reported from East Tennessee, where a mother looked at a corpse and later gave birth to a child with a pale, bluish color.

One of the most interesting of this type of marks is reported from Loudon County, Tennessee. There a woman had a son who was almost uncontrollable and was into all sorts of meanness. This she attributed to her being constantly annoyed by a neighbor's bad boy during the months that she was carrying her own.

In Roane County, Tennessee, an expectant mother was said to have taken a kind of fiendish delight in imitating a club-footed man who moved into the community to live. This woman took particular delight in seizing upon every opportunity to mock the afflicted newcomer. Even though her neighbors became alarmed and warned her, she persisted in her mimicry. Later, when a child was born to her, it was so terribly club-footed that hope of its ever walking was almost abandoned. The neighbors firmly believed that this mother had marked her child. In this same county there was born a baby with a harelip so severe that medical correction could not save the child's life, and it died of starvation. An expectant mother was very curious about this child and, in spite of warnings, went to see it. When her own child was born, he was harelipped so severely that she and her husband had to spend much time and money in their attempt to correct the deformity.

In the second class of markings, those caused by something done to the mother during pregnancy, may be cited the belief in southeastern Kentucky that if an expectant mother is bit by any animal, her child is very likely to be marked by tooth marks like those of the animal that bit the mother. It is also said that fright caused by an animal may leave its impression on the child.

From north central Tennessee the following case is reported. An expectant mother was sitting quietly in the living room one day when her husband prankishly pitched a large stuffed bear into her lap and thus frightened her severely. When their child was born, he was stocky and later developed into a man with a heavy, square frame, a lumbering gait and an expressionless face--a kind of human bear.

Another report of this type of influence on an unborn child comes from a village near Knoxville, Tennessee. A boy was born with only one hand, and the mother naturally attempted to find some explanation. She recalled an experience she had had two months before the arrival of her baby. She had seen a man's hand chopped off at the same point

of the wrist at which the baby's arm had ceased in the development of a hand structure. The mother believed that her shocking experience had been responsible for her baby's deformity.

The next three markings are reported as the direct result of fright suffered by the expectant mothers before the birth of their children. One of these mothers, in eastern Kentucky, was severely frightened by a dog just before the birth of her third child. When the baby came he seemed to breathe like a dog. Two other examples come from western Kentucky. In one case, a boy was born with markings on his face that looked like mice. The neighbors recalled that the mother had been badly frightened by a mouse before the baby's birth. In another family a boy was born with small red-birds on his body, and someone remembered that the boy's mother had been frightened by red-birds shortly before he was born.

In the third class, there are two or three cases of marking induced by injury to the mother's body or simply by touch associated with some concentration of sight or emotional tension. From East Tennessee comes the belief that if the mother strikes the womb during pregnancy, there will be a mark on the body of the child within at just the place where the blow landed. Another is the belief that if a mother craves some food, especially meat or fish and touches her body while she is craving the food, the body of the child will be marked at the same point on his body where his mother touched her body; and, with the color of the food the mother craved. Another more ominous possibility is that if the mother sees blood and happens to touch her body, the body of her child will be marked in the same place with bloody streaks.

We shall include only two interesting examples of marking by craving, though there are many which are quite similar. From the Piedmont in North Carolina comes the following incident. A pregnant mother was watching workers separate freshly dug sweet potatoes while she sat with arms folded. She wanted some of these potatoes badly but did not ask for them. In a month when her baby was born, there were red marks the size and shape of small potatoes on the arms of the baby where the mother's fingers had touched her arms as she craved the potatoes. From this same section comes the belief that the reason for so many birthmarks on the face is that when a pregnant mother is frightened she is likely to put her hands instinctively to her face, and wherever the fingers touch the face, one is likely to find a mark representing the shape of the object of fright on the baby's face.

A second example of marking by craving comes from Middle Tennessee. There was a mother who had taken snuff for many years. During her pregnancy, the doctor thought snuff injurious to her and forbade it. She became so nervous that she sat for long periods of time scratching her forehead. When her baby was born it had snuff-colored, scratch-like markings on its forehead running vertically from the eyebrow up into the hair-line.

In conclusion, we might cite four miscellaneous references to birthmarks that do not fit into any particular category. The first of these comes from Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

A girl there was born with a very large birthmark on her hand. She is now eighteen years old, and this mark has shifted its position to a point halfway between her wrist and elbow. There are other reports of birthmarks that move about on the body or that disappear and reappear with seasonal changes.

Another belief comes from midstate South Carolina. There it is believed that a brown birthmark indicates that the child's mother was frightened by an animal, usually a wild one.

A belief brought over from England to North Carolina is that if one is born under the sign Venus, he is most likely to be marked by a heart.

Finally, there is the belief that anyone covering his birthmark with a bandage will go blind for twenty-four hours. This last belief is most interesting because it recalls the superstitious fears that are deeply rooted among the folk, who try to find some kind of rational explanation for strange and often disfiguring marks that appear from time to time on children born into the community. It is not difficult to imagine the conditions that produce these beliefs among a people who know little of biological science and are fed upon legends and stories moving in an endless chain from the shadows of the past.

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## FOLKLORE OF JORDAN SPRINGS, TENNESSEE

By

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Jordan Springs was a small rural community located in the area now known as the reservation of Fort Campbell, Kentucky. It was approximately seventeen miles from Clarksville near the Kentucky line. Although Jordan Springs proper consisted of one or, at times, two stores in a valley between two hills, the name also applied to the community of about a three-mile radius. This community came to its forced death in 1942 as a result of World War II and the government's decision to establish a military reservation in an area taking in parts of Montgomery and Stewart counties in Tennessee and Christian and Trigg counties in Kentucky.

Although I was unable to secure any information as to where the name "Jordan" originated, the origin of "Springs" is obvious. Water came up out of a spring and ran along for about 12 yards and then sank back into the ground forming a large pool of water. I was told that the bottom of this pool of water was never found. The water flowed out into a gentle creek that was forded by the modern automobiles and, in years past, the buggies and wagons. Since there was no bridge over the creek, a swinging bridge was used by people on foot who wished to cross it.



Jordan Springs, in its earlier days, was a self-sustaining community. A country general store was always the center of activity. The store was located by the spring. The earliest known operator of the store was a Dr. Anderson who also served as the community's doctor. There was a blacksmith shop, the operator also making the caskets required by the community. In addition to the store and blacksmith shop, there was a grist mill where corn was ground into meal and wheat into flour. The mill burned, however, somewhere around 1875.

In the early days, the school was located approximately a mile from the "Springs." During the late days of the community, the school was located at the top of the hill above the creek. At one time, two years of high school were offered but prior to 1942 this was discontinued. The school was moved, one room at a time, to Woodlawn, Tennessee, where it later burned.

When the community met its death, there were two churches. They were located by the school. One was Baptist and one Church of Christ. Little is now known of the early history of the churches of the community.

Among the early settlers of the community appeared such names as Moss, Shelby, Chester, Moody, Wyatt, Clardy and Herning.

Recreation and amusement were provided by many varied activities many of them being methods of accomplishing necessary chores. Pea hullings were held. A prize was given to the person shelling the most peas. Apple and peach peelings were held at night in many instances. A barn raising was an important occasion. The entire community usually turned out. The men, of course, spent their time and energy in building the new barn. The women went along and spent the day at the farmhouse where a meal, which was comparable to a feast, was prepared and served at noon. The wheat threshing was similar to the barn raisings in that everyone came and the women again prepared the wonderful meal. The wheat thresher progressed from one farm to another until the wheat was all harvested. Wheat threshings were eagerly awaited, each year, by the people. As soon as the wheat was threshed, clean straw was available from the huge strawstacks left behind. The straw-ticks from the beds were washed and filled to overflowing with the clean, sweet-smelling straw. When night came, the beds were so high that it was almost necessary to climb into bed by means of a ladder. The strawstacks also provided a favorite playground for the children.

The season of converting sorghum cane into sorghum molasses was also a favorite time of the year. All the people gathered at the sorghum mill and stayed over for the festivities that night. When night came, some of the syrup was cooked down and a candy-pulling was held. Everyone present participated and all agreed that the day's work had been well worthwhile.

One of the most prominent social gatherings was the pound party. Everyone in the community was invited to someone's house for a party. Along with the invitation came a request to bring a pound of food. All of the food was spread out together where each guest took his choice, usually sampling a little of everything present. After the



feast, games were enjoyed by all.

Square dances and ice cream suppers were also enjoyed as favorite social activities, the ice cream supper being a rather modern event. The square dances usually lasted until dawn. One ex-resident of the community recalled having stayed at the dances, during the winter, until it was necessary to unthaw the horse's feet from the ground before journeying home.

A wedding in the community was always accompanied by a chivaree. The newly married couple were visited by a group of friends and neighbors. The people gathered around the house and proceeded to make as much noise as possible. If they were not invited into the house and served refreshments, the groom was dumped in the pond or some other similar trick was played. It seemed that the bride and groom usually obliged by supplying ample refreshments.

The quilting bee was enjoyed by the women of the community. A group of women would gather at someone's house where they spent the day quilting. A noon meal was served by the lady of the house. In more recent days, it became a custom to surprise the woman for whom the quilting was held. Each person carried a dish of food, thereby relieving the surprised hostess of preparing the meal. When the day drew to a close, the hostess had a new quilt or sometimes two or three new quilts to add to her supply of bed-covers.

One of the games enjoyed at the different social gatherings was "Spin the Top." A sauce pan top was used for the top. The people all sat around in a circle. Someone from the circle got up and spun the top calling out the name of a person to catch it. If the person failed to catch the spinning top, then he had to pay a penalty. The penalty was usually the relinquishing of some article such as a ring, necklace or knife. When the game was over, all of the lost articles were redeemed. One person sat in a chair and one stood behind him. The one who stood behind the chair held up the article over the head of the person sitting in the chair. The person sitting in the chair named the penalty which had to be paid in order to redeem the article. The person sitting in the chair could not see the article being held over his head. The person standing would say, "Heavy, heavy hangs over your head." The person seated would then say, "Fine or super-fine?" The answer was "fine" if the article belonged to a boy and "super-fine" if the article belonged to a girl. Then the person seated in the chair would name the feat which would have to be done to regain possession of the lost article. Some examples of sentences were "crow like a rooster," "sing a song," "recite a verse," etc.

Although modern-day engineers probably would not call on a "water witch," the people of Jordan Springs strongly believed in the power of the forked peachtree branch. Many of the wells were located by the community's "water witch."

One of the most quoted stories of the community was about a fellow named Will. It seemed that Will was on his way home one night, walking through the woods, when he kept hearing a whippoorwill singing. Will, however, was not aware that the singing was that of a whippoorwill. Will thought it was some spirit afar speaking to him, saying,

"Whip her Will." He, therefore, continued on his journey home and having seriously believed "the voice," whipped his wife when he arrived home.

### Cures and Remedies

The following cures and remedies were often relied on in the Jordan Springs community.

1. Ginger tea, made with hot water, ginger, sugar and whiskey, was used for colds.
2. Cough syrup was made from wild cherry bark and mullein (a weed).
3. Make tea out of hog's hoof for bad colds.
4. Use heated tobacco leaves on the chest as a poultice to break up pneumonia.
5. Scrape the black ashes from the bottom of an old black iron kettle. Mix the ashes with sugar. This is good for the croup.
6. Heat salt in a skillet and then put in a bag. Apply the hot salt bag to the side or the area of pain.
7. To stop a child from slobbering, steal a dishrag from someone.
8. For earache, blow tobacco smoke in the ear and then put a cloth in the ear. This will "bring a risin to a head."
9. Use a poultice made of red clay and vinegar for sprains.
10. Use hot teas or heated whiskey to break out the measles.
11. For snake bites, take a live black chicken, stick a hole in him, put it over the wound and let him die. This will draw out the poison.
12. Catnip tea was given for hives.
13. Give babies sheep sap tea for the hives.
14. Pick a wart and let it bleed on a grain of corn. Feed the grain of corn to a chicken. The wart will then go away.
15. Warts will go away if you bruise a bean leaf and bury it.
16. To remove warts, mix equal parts of hog lard and soda together and apply to the warts. This was applied occasionally until the warts go away.
17. To get rid of warts, steal a dishrag and bury it or put it under the doorstep. The wart will go away.
18. A nutmeg was worn around the neck to keep away the phthisic.
19. Egg liniment was considered to be one of the necessities of the medicine cabinet. This was made from egg, vinegar, salt, turpentine and coal oil. A hole was made in the egg and the egg was poured out into a bottle. Equal portions of the other ingredients were used, the egg shell being used as a measuring cup. The ingredients were all mixed thoroughly together. The liniment was used for sprains, rheumatism, etc.
20. Wear a red flannel yarn around your ankle to prevent cramping of your legs and feet.
21. A nutmeg, on a black silk thread, was worn around the neck to ward off neuralgia.
22. A poultice made of hot corn meal and applied to the area of pain is good for rheumatism.

23. Assafetida was worn by children to ward off diseases, such as whooping cough. This was worn around the neck in a little bag.
24. Stuff a toad-frog with butter and bake. The grease which bakes out is used as a medicine for scrofula.
25. Swallow a bedbug in a capsule to cure chills.
26. Cobwebs were rolled up to form a little ball and then were taken as a pill to cure chills.
27. When maggots get in a wound, use elderberry leaves to draw them out. The leaves are placed in the bed with the patient.
28. For a wound of a rusty nail, soak in warm water with peachtree leaves in it.
29. A poultice made of scraped Irish potato was used for "risins" and for rusty nail wounds.
30. Fat meat was used as a poultice for "risins."
31. Indian turnips (wild turnips) were used to make plasters for sprains.
32. A mixture of cream of tartar and sulphur was taken three times a day for "risins" and boils.
33. Gunpowder mixed with sweetmilk was used for poison ivy.
34. Gather seeds in the fall from a weed known as "wormfuge." Mix the seeds with sorghum molasses and cook down to a candy. The candy is a cure for worms in children.
35. Leeches were put on people to "bleed them" when they had too much blood.
36. Certain people in the community could read certain verses in the Bible and stop bleeding.
37. Drink water off of watermelon seeds for the kidneys.
38. Use hog foot oil mixed with turpentine as a laxative.
39. You can remove freckles from your face by washing it in dew on the first three mornings of May.

#### Weather Signs

The people of the Jordan Springs community shared much of the widespread lore relating to the weather and the planting of crops.

1. The way a turkey turns his head when he goes to roost is the way the wind will be blowing the next morning. He turns so the wind blows his feathers down instead of up.
2. When wild geese go south, it is a sign of cold weather.
3. When the pigs squeal at night, it will turn cold.
4. When chickens that roost in a tree go high up in the tree, it is going to turn cold.
5. When the fire pops at night, it is going to snow.
6. Smoke settling to the ground is a sign of falling weather.
7. When the birds go west, it is a sign of a hard winter.
8. When the corn grows tall, it is a sign of a hard winter.
9. If you have a hot summer, you will have a hard winter.
10. When the chickens have a heavy coat of feathers, it is a sign of a hard winter.

11. When it clears off at night, it won't stay clear.
12. If the sun sets behind a bank on Sunday night, it will rain before Wednesday night.
13. If there is a circle around the moon, it is going to rain. The number of stars within the circle represents the number of days before rain.
14. If the clouds go away before seven o'clock, they will come back during the day and it will rain. But if it stays cloudy until after seven o'clock and then clears off, it will stay clear the rest of the day.
15. When you see a dog sitting down watching a buzzard in flight, it is going to rain.
16. When it rains and the sun shines at the same time, it is a sign that it will rain tomorrow.
17. A circle around the moon is a sign of rain.
18. The sun "drawing water" is a sure sign of rain.
19. If the sun goes down behind a bank, it will rain.
20. If the sun rises behind a bank, it will rain.
21. If rain starts before seven, it will quit before eleven.
22. When guineas holler, it is a sign of rain.
23. When a mule shakes the dust off with the harness on, it is a sign of rain.

#### Planting Signs

1. Plant corn on dark nights for more ears and less stalk.
2. Plant potatoes on dark nights for less vine and more potatoes.
3. For a good garden, always plant on Good Friday.
4. When you first hear doves holler, it is time to plant corn.
5. Plant butterbeans in the full of the moon for more beans.
6. Plant cucumbers before sun-up when the sign is in the twins for more cucumbers.

#### Love and Marriage Superstitions

Here are some of the notions the Jordan Springs people had about one of the central experiences in life.

1. On the first day of May, hold a mirror over a well. Look in the mirror and you will see the reflection of the person you are going to marry. If you are not going to marry, then you will see your coffin.
2. When you take a new quilt out of the frames, let four eligible maidens take each corner; put a cat in the middle and shake the quilt with the cat in it. The maiden toward whom the cat runs will be the next one to get married.
3. When you spend the night in a strange place, name each of the four corners of the room with the names of your boy friends. You will marry the boy whose name you have given to the corner which you first look at when you wake up.
4. When you sleep under a new quilt, you will dream about the person you are going to marry.
5. Two unmarried people pull a pulley bone in two. The one who gets the shortest piece will get married first.



6. If you have a sore on the inside of your nose, some of your "pore" kinfolk are going to get married.
7. Twist the stem of an apple while repeating the alphabet. The letter on which the stem breaks is the first letter of the name of the person you will marry.
8. "Fortune Told with an Apple"

Eat an apple and count the seeds.

One I love  
 Two I love  
 Three I love the best  
 Four I love with all my heart  
 Five I cast away  
 Six he loves  
 Seven she loves  
 Eight both love  
 Nine he comes  
 Ten he tarries  
 Eleven he courts  
 Twelve he marries  
 Thirteen we housekeep  
 Fourteen we part  
 Fifteen a widow with a broken heart.

Your fortune is indicated by the top number of seeds in the apple.

9. Peel an apple with an unbroken peeling. Throw the peeling over your left shoulder. The letter it forms when it lands is the first letter of the name of the man you will marry.
10. If you drop a dishrag, go squeeze it out on the doorstep and your "feller" will come to see you.
11. Take a large rose petal, gather the edges into a ball and hit it on your head. If it pops, he loves you. If it doesn't pop, then he doesn't love you.
12. If you marry in white, you have chosen all right.  
 If you marry in black, you will wish yourself back.  
 If you marry in red, you will wish yourself dead.  
 If you marry in green, you will hate to be seen.  
 If you marry in blue, your lover is true.  
 If you marry in yellow, he's not much of a fellow.
13. "Pick Your Wedding Day"  
 Monday for health,  
 Tuesday for wealth,  
 Wednesday is the best day of all,  
 Thursday for crosses,  
 Friday for losses,  
 Saturday is no day at all.
14. Tears for the bride if it rains on her wedding day.

15. "Trim Your Fingernails for Your Fortune"
  - Monday for danger,
  - Tuesday for a stranger,
  - Wednesday for a letter,
  - Thursday for something better,
  - Friday for sorrow,
  - Saturday to see your sweetheart tomorrow.
16. The number of white spots on your fingernails represent the number of boy friends you have.
17. The number of white spots on your fingernails represent the number of years before you will marry.
18. White spots on your fingernails, beginning with your thumb, represent friend, foe, sweetheart, lover, and beau.
19. To dream of a death is a sign of a wedding.

#### Bad Luck and Death Signs

Naturally, many common beliefs about death and disaster were well known in Jordan Springs.

1. To dream of muddy water is a sign of bad luck.
2. It is bad luck for a mother to cross water before her baby is a month old.
3. It is bad luck to start anything on Monday unless you finish it that day.
4. It is bad luck to start anything on Friday.
5. It is bad luck to kill a cricket.
6. Don't take out ashes on Monday morning, as that will bring bad luck.
7. It is bad luck to take out ashes after sundown.
8. It is bad luck to sweep trash out the door after night.
9. It is bad luck to let a woman come in your house first on New Year's Day.
10. If you sew on New Year's Day, you will sew on a shroud before the year is up.
11. It is bad luck to wash on New Year's Day.
12. It is bad luck to cut a baby's fingernails off before it is a year old. It is all right to bite them off.
13. It is bad luck to have your hair cut in March.
14. It is bad luck for a bird to fly into the house.
15. It is bad luck for a rooster to crow after sundown.
16. It is bad luck to let an umbrella up inside the house.
17. If you leave the house and forget something and have to go back, make a cross on the ground and spit at it before you go back. Otherwise, it is bad luck to go back.
18. It is bad luck to burn bread. If you do, you will be hungry.
19. It is bad luck for a baby to see itself in the mirror before it is a year old.
20. It is bad luck to step over a person lying on the floor or ground unless you step back.
21. You will have seven years bad luck if you break a mirror.
22. It is bad luck for a black cat to cross your path.

23. If a garment is cut out on Friday and not finished, you will die before you can wear it out.
24. A picture falling off the wall is a sign of a death.
25. If you hear a hen crow, it is the sign of a death. You must kill the hen immediately.
26. A sneeze, while eating, is a sign of death.
27. If a chicken crows between sundown and midnight, it is a sign of a death or hasty news.
28. To dream of a wedding is a sign of a death.
29. If you kill a frog; your cow will go dry.

#### Good Luck Signs

Good fortune, of course, also had its omens in Jordan Springs. Some of them are listed here.

1. To dream of clear water is a sign of good luck.
2. It is good luck for a man to come to your house first on New Year's Day.
3. It is good luck to find a four-leaf clover.
4. It is good luck for a dark complected man to come to your house first on New Year's Day.
5. A cricket on your hearth is a sign of good luck.
6. It brings good luck to have blackeye peas and hog jowl on New Year's Day.
7. Cook a piece of money with blackeye peas and hog jowl on New Year's Day and you will have money all year.
8. It is good luck to hang a horseshoe over the door.
9. Two people pull a wishbone and make a wish. The one who gets the longest piece will have his wish come true.
10. If you find a horseshoe out in the field, pick it up and throw it over your left shoulder and it will bring you good luck.
11. If you accidentally put clothes on wrong side out, wear them that way for good luck. You will have bad luck if you change them.

#### Miscellaneous

Jordan Springs people had many other superstitions and traditional sayings, some of which may be reported here.

1. Keep babies in the dark until they are nine days old or they will go blind.
2. Birds of a feather flock together.
3. When the cat is away, the mice will play.
4. When it rains, it pours.
5. Curiosity killed the cat.
6. A cat has nine lives.
7. If you drop a fork, a man will come.
8. If you drop a knife, a woman will come.

9. High tempered people have the best luck with hot pepper.
10. If you wade in the first snow barefooted, your feet will stay warm all winter and you won't have colds.
11. If you drop a dishrag, someone is "coming hungry," or someone is "coming for dinner."
12. The seventh son in a family possesses special (magic) powers, for example, the ability to make chairs and tables walk.
13. If the evening is gray and the morning is red, put on your hat because it will wet your head.  
If the evening is red and the morning is gray, it will set the traveler on his way.
14. If the moon sets slanting, it is spilling water.
15. If your eye-brows meet, you are jealous.
16. If your skirt hem is turned up, kiss the hem, make a wish and the wish will come true.
17. When setting hens, select long eggs and they will be roosters.
18. When setting hens, select round eggs and they will be pullets.
19. If you see a red bird, you will see somebody unexpected.
20. The number of white spots on your fingernails represent the number of lies you have told.
21. Clocks should always be stopped at the time of a death and remain so until after the funeral.
22. Make a wish on the first star you see at night. Do not tell the wish. When you make the wish, repeat the following verse:  
Star Light, Star Bright  
The first star I see tonight  
I wish I may, I wish I might  
Have this wish I wish tonight.
23. Stump your toe,  
Kiss your thumb,  
See your beau.

### Riddles

Some of the riddles repeated in the Jordan Springs community were the following.

1. Big at the bottom,  
Little at the top,  
Something in the middle goes flippity flop.      Answer: Churn
2. What runs around the house all day and sits under the bed at night with its tongue hanging out?      Answer: "Little boy's shoe"
3. Round as a biscuit,  
Busy as a bee,  
Prettiest little thing  
I ever did see.      Answer: "Watch"



4. What goes over water, under water, and never touches water?

Answer: "A colored woman carrying a bucket of water on her head, walking on a log over a creek."

5. What goes all over the house in the daytime and sits in the corner at night?

Answer: "Broom"

One of the songs remembered as frequently sung in the Jordan Springs community was one called "Work for a Little All Day."

#### Work for a Little All Day

There was an old man and he lived alone.  
He had three sons and they were all grown.  
When he come to make his will,  
He didn't have nothing but a blessed old mill--  
Sing, work for a little all day.

The old man called his first son, said,  
"Son, oh son, my life is done,  
And to you my will I'll make  
If you'll tell me the toll you mean for to take--"  
Sing, work for a little all day.

"Day, oh dad, my name is Heck  
When I measure a bushel, I'll take a peck."  
"If that's the toll you mean for to take,  
The will to you I will not make."  
Sing, work for a little all day.

The old man called his second son, said,  
"Son, oh son, my life is done  
And to you the will I'll make  
If you tell me the toll you mean for to take--"  
Sing, work for a little all day.

"Dad, oh dad, my name is Ralph  
When I measure a bushel, I'll take a half."  
"If that's the toll you mean for to take,  
The will to you I will not make."  
Sing, work for a little all day.

The old man called his third son, said,  
"Son, oh son, my life is done,  
And to you my will I'll make  
If you'll tell me the toll you mean for to take--"  
Sing, work for a little all day.

"Dad, oh dad, my name is Hall,  
 When I measure a bushel, I'll take all.  
 And if my fortune I don't make  
 I'll take all the bran and swear to the sack."  
 Sing, work for a little all day.

The old man walled his eyes and died,  
 And the old woman threwed up her hands and cried.  
 The old man didn't get to make no will  
 So I'll get that blessed old mill.  
 And I'll work for a little all day.

This partial profile of folk culture in Jordan Springs is composed of reports based on the memory of former citizens of the community. I wish to acknowledge and express my appreciation to the following people: Mrs. W. A. Shelby, Mrs. G. E. Skinner, Mrs. Belle Ingram, Miss Myrtle Ingram, Mr. and Mrs. George Moss, Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Clardy, and Mrs. Emmett Clardy. Mr. and Mrs. Moss are Negroes; all other informants are white people of British or Irish stock, as their names indicate. The community of Jordan Springs is generally supposed to have been originally founded by Scotch-Irish settlers from North Carolina.

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## THE NATIONAL FOLK FESTIVAL IN TENNESSEE

By

Sarah Gertrude Knott  
 Nashville, Tennessee

The 23rd annual National Folk Festival will take place at the Coliseum in Nashville, Tennessee, May 6-10, sponsored by the Nashville Tennessean.

Folk song and dance groups from more than twenty states will be on hand with the kind of folk legacies which have accumulated around home fires or community gatherings since early days. Conferences and dance workshops will be a part of the over-all program. Tennessee will send its best folk dancers and singers from small community Festivals of the Agricultural Extension Service, University of Tennessee, and the Tennessee Farm Bureau. Some of the same groups who came to the National Folk Festival in Chattanooga for the second Festival will be on hand for the 23rd annual gathering. Tennesseans have followed the trails to every Festival city.

Effort will be made especially to stress the inherited forms of folk songs, music, dances and other lore; but many changes in attitude and conditions of life which influence folk traditions have come about since the National Folk Festival left Chattanooga to follow the circuitous route throughout the country.

Up to the end of World War II, the development of folk festivals and the teaching of folk songs and dances for recreational purposes was gradual. Local and even state and regional festivals were small, though the objectives seemed clear. But when peace came and the long tension was lifted, a widespread enthusiasm and popularization burst into unparalleled activity in many states. Giant folk and square dance festivals began to spring up, resulting in folk and square dance federations following the lead of California. Each festival was a law unto itself, reflecting the special interest of the leaders, many of whom were new in the field; few had inherited traditional expressions.

For the last ten years or more, it has been harder to keep the emphasis where it ought to be to make folk festivals reflect the history of this country and the heart-throbs of our own people; it has been more difficult to avoid having festivals become "hodge-podge"--reflective of many nations but not genuinely expressive of our own. Standardization has been consciously encouraged by certain groups: recordings of music have pushed "live" musicians further into the background; country music floods radio and television, replacing genuine folk songs and confusing the picture in many states, even including the ones where rich treasures of inherited songs and music are still available and ready for use.

A new way of life is ending many of the inherited kinds of folk legacies--those handed down traditionally--in spite of widespread activity and publicity about the newly taught, standardized folk dances and songs recently learned from books. But the roots of a number of our genuinely traditional folk creations are still alive, and there is hope for revival from these roots if effort is made in time.

Those who look beneath the surface can see the influence of three kinds of present day leaders interested in folklore. If they would join hands for the common good, many of the heritages which might otherwise be lost, could, we believe, be saved. These three kinds of leaders are:

The purist who believes that the folk songs and dances should not be touched unless it is possible to present them in their original state--what the scholar considers the genuinely authentic form. The purist is, of course, highly important because he sets the goal for which to reach. While seldom does a festival measure up altogether to the purist's standards, it comes nearer because his kind exists.

The for-fun-only leaders who often have no qualms about changing individualistic folk legacies to make them better meet immediate needs for recreation, serving many with more standardized forms. The majority of this class has no special knowledge of the past or future potential value of any phase of folklore; however, if the "for-fun-only" dancers and singers from coast to coast do no more than lighten the load and relieve the tension felt today, they are serving a real purpose. We cannot see the present with sufficient perspective to be sure about the value of the new creations as folklore tomorrow; but we do know that whatever there is of cultural value of the past must pass through the present to reach tomorrow, and we know that such periods of popularization in other older countries have resulted in some of the folk heritages recognized as

traditional today.

The middle-ground leader who finds the most real and lasting satisfaction by following the traditional as closely as possible in form, substance, and spirit, allowing for the inevitable changes which unconsciously come about to help make folk creations better meet the needs of the present. Most National Folk Festival participants believe the middle-ground leader's viewpoint to be the most logical one to follow. They know that folk traditions have never remained static; yet, they realize that unless folk songs, dances and other lore have certain characteristics, they have no right to be classified as folklore; unless they are genuine they are not the reflection of the spirit, or cultural background of the race or nationality that created them and therefore lose their force in helping to bring about understanding among peoples. Unless they are genuine, they are not likely to last; they will go the way of all fads.

Most countries are now deeply concerned with the passing of the old way of life and the customs long cherished. The United States has a better chance than perhaps any other country to hold and revive many of its folk legacies; however, it will undoubtedly take the conscious effort of the three kinds of leaders and others who have the proper organizations ready to reach down into the small communities and encourage, dignify, build pride, and help to show the way to those who still know the basic traditional expressions. A continuous educational activity program is necessary to show to those who have inherited traditional forms that they have not lost their usefulness to meet recreational needs and artistic expressions in modern times.

A resolution from the International Folk Music Council which met in Oslo, Norway, in July 1955, with thirty-one nations represented, was sent to all countries of the world, emphasizing the importance of folk traditions for social and artistic purposes and for international efforts for peace and better understanding among nations. The resolution warned of the danger of these basic cultural forms passing everywhere before a new civilization, and urged all educational, recreational, and cultural organizations to collect these rich legacies for posterity, and to do everything possible to make them part of educational programs now. Collection and recording, important as it is, is not enough. The vital spark, the living unbroken tradition should be kept.

It is highly important that a recreational-cultural program be developed and carried on in rural communities and small-town localities where such programs are being neglected by the people to whom they especially belong. Rural people have always been guardians, chief users and (in the majority of cases) originators of folklore. Now in our country and in others, city dwellers are much more active and interested than are their country cousins; however, it is doubtful that many of the new city-created songs and dances which are springing up in a new kind of civilization will ever build the kind of foundation necessary to cast their influence into the future. It is doubtful that they can have the characteristics which heretofore have been the distinguishing earmarks of folklore.

We face a future when there will be more leisure time for every one. An expanded



recreation program for rural and urban folks, rich and poor, young and old, is a must. It would be unwise indeed to allow our folk songs, music, and wealth of other lore in the forms which are still lingering or flourishing in many localities to pass unnoticed, while we superimpose other programs less significant, and leave many people whom the traditional forms have served from early days until now without recreational and artistic outlets.

Thousands are enjoying folk songs and dances recently learned. Teaching is one of the necessary ways to make folk traditions meet present day needs; but more should also be learning from those who have learned the traditional ways. There is no reason to discard the older traditional songs and dances handed down from generation to generation or fail to incorporate them into today's recreational programs.

There is a quality and style that cannot be quickly or perhaps ever be acquired unless new singers and dancers learn from the older ones who have inherited the traditional way. There are still many dancers left who have special styles of square dancing typical of different regions--dances and style they have known all their lives; there are still many singers who have styles of singing which belong only to those who have known the songs long, loved them well, and sung them often; there are Negroes, Polish people, Spanish American, French, Jewish, Italian, German, and other ethnic groups--old and new Americans--whose renditions of traditional legacies from other lands have the special inexplicable spirit of the race or nationality that created them. All these and many more are being overlooked by recreation leaders, farm organizations, and many other kinds of cultural and educational groups whose programs would be made more rich and colorful, more exciting and more significant by the inclusion of these traditional legacies along with other already existing programs where teaching outright is the order of the day. The Folk Festival to be held in Nashville will give all such groups opportunity to meet together and to demonstrate to the public what they have inherited that is worth preserving in our culture.

## EVENTS AND COMMENTS

THE 1959 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE TENNESSEE FOLKLORE SOCIETY will be held on Saturday, November 14, at Tennessee Polytechnic Institute, Cookeville. The location of the meeting will be peculiarly appropriate, for it was at T.P.I. in Cookeville that the Society was founded twenty-five years ago. A special program will be planned to celebrate our silver anniversary.

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THOUGH THE NATIONAL FOLK FESTIVAL to be held in Nashville on May 6-10 is discussed in an extended article in this Bulletin, it is also fitting to say a few words about it here. Miss Knott and her staff have been working hard, and they promise a program that will be both dramatically effective and educationally significant.

In addition to the regular afternoon and evening performances of folk singers and dancers, two special features of the Festival this year deserve attention. One is the exhibit of folk crafts and arts that will be seen at the Coliseum. The other is the Sunday program of traditional religious music to be given on May 10. Participating in this program will be fine groups of singers who will present the old psalms, hymns, spirituals and Southern harmonies.

For academically or professionally minded people, there will also be arranged in connection with the Festival a series of panel discussions on such topics as "The Relation Between Folk Music and Other Types of Popular Song."

The details of the Festival program and related activities will, of course, be published in Tennessee newspapers.

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DAVE K. WEBB, in a note accompanying his application for membership in T.F.S., calls attention to the Spring Meeting of the OHIO FOLKLORE SOCIETY at the Ohio State Museum, on the campus of Ohio State University, in Columbus, on April 11. "Many folksy events and folklore papers," he writes, "are scheduled for that day and evening. If any of your Tennessee folks can attend they will be mighty welcome." One of the papers to be presented in the afternoon session, incidentally, will be that prepared by D. K. Wilgus on the Kentucky tradition of the hanged fiddler ballad, "MacPherson's Farewell."

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FROM REBEL RECORDS, Box 6146, Nashville, comes an announcement of the publication of a new 12 inch 33-1/3 r.p.m. disc of folksong recordings by Grace Cresswell. The songs presented are "Lord Randall," "Ra Re," "Queen Jane," "Rose Condoley," "The Three Ravens," "Red Bud's Blood," "George Campbell," "John Henry," "Edward," "Mary Hamilton," "Gypsy Davey," and "Scarborough Fair."

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FRANK WARNER has made an LP album of folksongs which is Volume III in the Our Singing Heritage series. It may be purchased from Elektra Records, 116 West 14th Street, New York 11, for \$4.98. The same publisher offers Frank Warner Sings American Folk Songs and Ballads (EKL-3) and Frank Warner Sings Songs and Ballads of America's Wars (EKL-13), 10 inch LP discs that sell for \$3.50 each.

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THE FOURTH NUMBER of the Folklore and Folk Music Archivist carries a report on Northwestern University's Laboratory of Comparative Musicology by Alan P. Merriam and a discussion of "The Reproduction of Cylinder Recordings" by George List.

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RECENT ISSUES OF POLISH FOLKLORE contain a number of extremely interesting folktales from Poland. From the March, 1959, issue we also learn that "For women (not men), rue is an aphrodisiac, through its perfume alone." A special publication by the editor of Polish Folklore, Marion Moore Coleman, is Lechitica, offered in honor of Charlotte Bielawski-Yess on the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of her work on The Polish Land. The little pamphlet, in addition to a tribute to Miss Bielawski-Yess, contains an essay on "Folk Elements in Slowacki's Balladyna . . ." and an index to articles and other materials on Polish folklore published between 1943 and 1958.

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A PAPER READ BY JAMES H. PENROD AT THE T. F. S. annual meeting last fall is now in print in the Kentucky Folklore Record, IV, iv (October-December, 1958) under the title, "Two Types of Incongruity in Old Southwestern Humor." In the same issue of the Record, Leonard Roberts describes the children's game of "buckety-buck"; William Hugh Jansen discusses "Ten Broeck and Molly"; Ruth Montell tells "Tales from Monroe County Children"; and Lawrence S. Thompson presents "More Buzzard Lore."

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"LEGENDS OF THE CURSED CHILD," by Herbert Halpert, and "Linguistic Geography and the Study of Folklore," by Raven I. McDavid, Jr., are two of the interesting articles published in Volume IV, No. 3 (Autumn, 1958) of the New York Folklore Quarterly. This issue of the Quarterly also particularly honors the veteran folklorist, Harold N. Thompson.

The Winter Meeting of the New York Folklore Society, a Hudson-Champlain commemoration, will be held on the afternoon of March 14 in the auditorium of the New York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West, New York City.

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FOLK RECIPES and folk cooking were subjects on which (without result) the readers of this Bulletin were, many months ago, invited to submit notes. The interesting (and valuable!) sort of thing that can be done with such subjects is indicated by Miriam B. Webster in "Maine Winter Menus: A Study in Ingenuity," in Northeast Folklore, I, i (Spring, 1958). Volume I, iii (Fall, 1958) of the same journal makes available collections of "Folklore from Aroostook County, Maine, and Neighboring Canada," edited by Bacil F. Kirtley.

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"THE PLUCKED DULCIMER" is the title of an article by John Putnam published with fine photographs and drawings in Mountain Life and Work, XXXIV, iv (1958). The article deals mainly with the identification of makers of dulcimers and a request for further information. Mr. Putnam is working as Chairman of a committee whose expectation is the publication of a book on the dulcimer to be issued under the joint auspices of the Council of Southern Mountains and the Tennessee Folklore Society.

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NORTH CAROLINA FOLKLORE, VI, ii (December, 1958), contains "Some Folk Sayings from North Carolina" (collected by George F. Wilson), the ballad called "The Murder of Lottie Yates" with notes by Virgil L. Sturgill, a collection of "Folk Remedies in the Roanoke-Chowan Section" made by Hazel Griffin, and an account of "Witchcraft in Durham" (transmitted by Daniel W. Patterson).

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"THE SOURCES OF DAVY CROCKETT, AMERICAN COMIC LEGEND" is the title of an essay by Richard M. Dorson in Midwest Folklore, VIII, iii (Fall, 1958). The leading item in the issue is Butler H. Waugh's collection of "Negro Tales of John Kendry from Indianapolis."

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"THE HEX DOCTOR AND THE WITCH OF FARRANDSVILLE," a Pennsylvania report of supernatural doings, is presented in the Keystone Folklore Quarterly, III, ii (Summer, 1958).

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WEST VIRGINIA FOLKLORE gave its Spring, 1958, issue over to children's rhymes, games, and stories. The Summer, 1958, issue was devoted to stories about mines.

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ITEMS OF SPECIAL INTEREST in recent issues of Southern Folklore:  
Folklore Bibliography for 1957- XXII, i (March, 1958)

"Burial of the Drowned Among the Gullah Negroes," by Hennig Cohen -  
XXII, ii (June, 1958)

"The Cowboy, The Knight, and Popular Taste," by Joseph Waldmeier -  
XXII, iii (September, 1958)

"Minority Groups in Old Southern Humor," by James H. Penrod -  
XXII, iii (September, 1958)

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GERTRUDE P. KURATH discusses "Transculturation in the Hispanic-American Dance" in Folklore Americas, XVIII, ii (December, 1958).

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A CURIOUS STUDY of the "Naming of Vehicles," by J. M. B. Farfán, is printed in Folklore Americano, V (1957). It consists mainly of an index of names of private automobiles, taxis, buses, etc., found in Peru. The names are classified in twenty-three categories.

Among the various interesting articles on Latin-American folklore in the same journal is also a report on children's games on the east coast of England by W. Watson.

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Fernando de Castro Pires de Lima, A Mulher Vestida de Homem. Lisbon: Fundação Nacional para a Alegria no Trabalho, Gabinete de Etnografia, 1958. 381 pp.

Pires de Lima has long been interested in the folklore of his country, as two earlier books, A Condessinha de Aragão and A Nau Catrineta, amply demonstrate. His title for this book indicates a very broad subject, to some extent justified by the contents. A part of the work is given to a summary of the use of the device of the woman in male attire in Spanish and Portuguese literature.

His principal interest in this book is a more limited theme, "The Damsel Who Goes to War." It appears in a traditional xácara, or ballad, which is found in numerous variants throughout the Peninsula. Since the publication of the Romanceiro of Almeida Garrett in 1875, it has been accepted as a fact that this ballad was of Spanish origin. This opinion of Garrett, based on the quotation in Spanish of four lines of the poem, in the Aulegrafia of Jorge Ferreira de Vasconcelos, published in 1619, is subjected to severe scrutiny by Pires de Lima. He wisely does not try to prove a Portuguese origin of the ballad, indicating rather a medieval theme of unknown origin, from which are derived the numerous variants in Portuguese, Spanish and Catalan, and somewhat more remote ones in Italian and French.

In connection with this theme, the author discusses two well-authenticated historical cases of women who went to war in masculine disguise: that of the Spanish Catalina de Erauso, the celebrated "Nun-Ensign," and that of a Portuguese heroine, Antônia Rodrigues. The latter, whose warlike exploits took place at Mazagan in Morocco, had a career which was so similar in many respects to that of the heroine of the ballad that some of the variants found in South Portugal have localized the scene of her activities at Mazagan.

The most interesting part of the work is the Romanceiro, which occupies one half of the book. In it Pires de Lima gives numerous variants collected by himself and by Leite de Vasconcelos in Portugal, and by various workers in Brazil and Spain, along with one each in Catalan, Italian, and French.

--Earl W. Thomas  
Vanderbilt University

Maud Karpeles, ed., The Collecting of Folk Music and Other Ethnomusicological Materials: A Manual for Field Workers. London: The International Folk Music Council and The Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 1958. 40 pp. 6 s. (paperback).

This collectors' guide is an enlargement of the Council's Manual for Folk Music Collectors of 1951. Designed to aid enthusiastic but untrained anthropologists (untrained, that is, in music), missionaries, and other travelers as well as more single-minded collectors of folk music and dance, it is heavy on film- and sound-recording in Africa,

for example; but realistic, mature suggestions to workers in the Anglo-Saxon tradition are not omitted. I should like to quote some of the most useful passages:

The collector should equip himself with . . . a tuning-fork, or pitch-pipe of which he has noted the pitch, and a pocket metronome (the tape-measure type is the most convenient).

A collector should never ask leading questions. The natural courtesy and good nature of the informant will often prompt him to give the answer that he thinks will best please rather than the one which is the most nearly related to fact.

In all cases mechanical recordings, sound or film, or both, should be used wherever possible. This gives not only an accurate record of the musical subtleties of rhythm, intonation and ornamentation, but also a reproduction of the style of performance which cannot be reduced to notation . . . . It is useful to have a photograph of the performer, or better still to make a film of him in action. It is also a help in capturing the live quality of the performance if a recording is made of the performer's conversation.

The text should be noted at the time of the recording.

Care should be taken to distinguish between a definite change of time value and a pause. When the prolongation of a note is consistent in the several stanzas of a song it may be taken to be a definite change in time value.

We would . . . remind the collector of the danger of layer-to-layer signal transfer in rolls of magnetic tape, commonly called "printing," which generally occurs immediately after recording and is apt to become more apparent after storage over a considerable period.

We would also mention that the life-expectancy of tape recordings is uncertain and it is advisable that all valuable recordings be copied onto disc.

In addition to such tips, Miss Karpeles includes discussion of tape recorders, of techniques of transferral from tape, of "Personal Relationship with Informants," and of collecting instrumental music. She provides, pp. 24-26, a splendid detailed sheet specifying data to be noted about the folk item, performer, and instrument being recorded. Conceivably everything in the manual could be applicable to collecting in Tennessee except reference to 50-cycle power supply. Other criticisms like "petrol" will occasion no trouble. Perhaps Tennessee collectors should seriously consider enlarging their horizon and adopting the prodigious and expensive techniques described of recording folk dances on sound film.

--George W. Boswell  
Austin Peay State College

Thomas M. N. Lewis and Madeline Kneberg, Tribes That Slumber. Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 1958. \$3.75.

Tribes That Slumber by Lewis and Kneberg is a masterful combining of archaeological research and historical record with a lay simplicity of style, racy, colorful and vivid, which focuses 15,000 years of the dim, dark past of our ancestry right at our doorstep--the valleys and mountains of East Tennessee. As someone recently remarked, "It is unquestionably one of the most significant and interesting books on Indians written in our time."

The timing and extent of the archaeological ages are now rather accurately determined by atomic-carbon radiation--that is, the amount of radiation which has taken place as a key to the measure of the time which has expired since these archaeological deposits were made. Other matters which have to do with chronological and comparative factors of these cultural patterns are: How the houses within the various periods were constructed; how food was obtained; what artistic and decorative skills were possessed; and what ideas were displayed concerning matters of life and death, government and freedom, peace and war, worship of deity and hope of immortality. Geographic and climatic conditions were also factors conducive to cultural change.

America's many prehistoric races were Asiatic. The earliest of these were the nomadic hunters of the Ice Age who came down to the Great Lakes Region of today, and beyond--even to Tennessee. The fluted points of their stone-tipped weapons have been found in fifteen Tennessee counties. These men were followed by the Woodland Indians more than eight thousand years ago, who were characterized by their oven pits and their potsherds showing fabric and cord impressions. These reached East Tennessee. Then followed the Burial Mound Builders and later the Temple Mound Builders whose several traditions were transmitted to the Tennessee Cherokees about 1500 A.D. These mound builders were variously located throughout the state.

Portions of this study deal with tribal custom and with ceremonial and religious observance. The dance had its place in peace and in war. Council meetings were symbolized by the colors of red and white--war and peace. Corn was both a food staple and an ingredient in ceremonial observance. The most important of the ceremonies was the "Busk" which had great religious significance. The Cherokees, who called themselves "The Principal People," perpetuated many of these rites and ceremonies. A part of their record is historical, particularly that taken from Desoto's Accounts. The story of the French and Indian Wars and of Ft. Loudon are fairly well known. Recent archaeological studies made of the Hiawassee Region (Hiawassee Island, 1946, by Lewis and Kneberg) constitute a more comprehensively localized account of many of these findings within the specific area of the Hiawassee-Tennessee Rivers.

--E. G. Rogers  
Tennessee Wesleyan College

Norris W. Yates, William T. Porter and "The Spirit of the Times." Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1957. xi + 222 pp. \$5.00

Mr. Yates has given his book the subtitle, "A Study of the Big Bear School of Humor." That indicates the focus of his attention, though his first chapter has a good deal to say about Porter, the man, and the first, second and final chapters contain a brief history of The Spirit as well as a more extended discussion of its general character.

The author is interested in explaining how Porter and his paper came to nourish frontier humorists, and what factors operated to produce the humorists that were nourished. He also analyzes the types of sketches published in the Spirit and gives summary accounts of a number of the men who wrote them. Perhaps the most impressive chapter in the book is the one that discusses the motives that led to the invention of American tall tales and classifies those Porter published.

This study is heavily documented. It furnishes plentiful leads to readers who may wish to pursue further the topics it touches on. Mr. Yates writes very respectably himself. He has given us a valuable addition to the growing library of special studies of "native American humor." At certain points, incidentally, he makes it clear that he realizes he is dealing with material that has an ancient history in folk tradition; but the character of its connections with that tradition remains largely unexplored.

--W. J. G.

James Reeves, ed., The Idiom of the People: English Traditional Verse . . . from the MSS of Cecil Sharp. New York: Macmillan, 1958. xii + 244 pp. \$4.50.

This a really important book. It presents the texts of 115 English ballads and other folksongs (plus a smaller group of fragments and miscellaneous popular lyrics) said to be accurately transcribed from Sharp's extensive collections. Mr. Reeves registers his belief that some forty of these have not previously been printed in any form. It is not this addition to our archives, however, that gives to the volume its most startling claim to attention. The editor makes the shocking assertion that of the remaining 75, "scarcely any have hitherto been published exactly as they were taken down" by Sharp from the lips of singers. His transcriptions amply support that generalization. To supply honest versions to substitute for the misrepresentations that have passed current is the great service performed by Mr. Reeves.

Every age, no doubt, has its reprehensible practices. Bishop Percy's bland effrontery in passing off prettified poems as the treasures of folk art was long ago deservedly condemned. But folklorists who deplore such dishonesty in an earlier day have often not shrunk from disgraceful practices of their own. As an example, as Mr. Reeves notes, Sharp published a version of "I'm Seventeen Come Sunday" in the Journal of the Folk-Song Society in 1905, 'silently replacing' And I laid in her arms till morning with And I stayed with her till morning. Less culpable was Sharp's printing



of a text of "Dabbling in the Dew" (in Folk Songs from Somerset, II, 1905) with a note on the words: "They are quite unsuitable for publication, so Mr. Marson has rewritten the ballad, retaining the first verse only and the refrain." Yet one has grounds for arguing with some heat that a ballad so rewritten has no right at all to be included in what is called a collection of folksongs. In the field of folklore studies, plenty of nonsense is bound to be propagated, but perhaps some could be prevented by elementary honesty in reporting.

It should be made clear that the cantankerous tone of the observations just made is not that of Mr. Reeves' introductory discussion of Sharp's work. That account quite rightly honors it for its real virtues, generously estimates the pressures of popular notions of "decency" that affected it, and insists that it became progressively more dependable and accurate as time went on. The assumption is made that in taking down what he heard, Sharp was always as accurate as he was capable of being; hence the usefulness of bringing out these texts that scrupulously represent his manuscripts.

Besides discussing Sharp's work as a collector, the nature of his collections, and the traditional treatment of the words of folksongs, Mr. Reeves' 57-page introduction briefly traces "the folk song movement in England," analyzes the content and language of folksongs, and presents extended studies of five such songs. The detailed discussion of "The Foggy Dew" is particularly interesting. It compares various versions of the song, gives a convincing explanation of the title phrase, and is made the occasion for comment on both the characteristic symbolism in folk poetry and the processes by which the words of a folksong may be degenerate into incoherence.

The texts here printed are followed by editorial commentaries: identification of the singers, index references to the Sharp manuscripts, interpretations of the vocabulary and symbolism, citations of variants, etc. There is a notable absence of adequate reference to American collection and scholarship.

No attention is given in this book to the tunes of the songs dealt with. In view of the current professional insistence on the undesirability of separating tune and text, the editor feels called on to justify his omission on several grounds. Since Mr. Reeves has performed so great a service, it would be ungenerous to complain because he has not done more.

--W. J. G.

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